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THEOSOPHY

A MAGAZINE DEVOTED TO

THE THEOSOPHICAL MOVEMENT, AND THE BROTHERHOOD OF HUMANITY

THE STUDY OF OCCULT SCIENCE AND PHILOSOPHY, AND ARYAN LITERATURE

Vol. XXXVIII—No. 9 **July, 1950**

THE *Ethics of Theosophy are more important than any divulgement of psychic laws and facts. The latter relate wholly to the material and evanescent part of the septenary man, but the Ethics sink into and take hold of the real man—the reincarnating Ego. Theosophy is indeed the life, the indwelling spirit which makes every true reform a vital reality, for Theosophy is Universal Brotherhood, the very foundation as well as the keystone of all movements toward the amelioration of our condition.* —H. P. BLAVSTSKY

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(a) To form the nucleus of a universal Brotherhood of Humanity, without distinction of race, creed, sex, caste, or color;

(b) The study of ancient and modern religions, philosophies and sciences, and the demonstration of the importance of such study; and

(c) The investigation of the unexplained laws of nature and the psychical powers latent in man.

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A U M

The wise embrace all knowledge, but they are most earnest about what is of greatest importance. —MENCIUS

THEOSOPHY

Vol. XXXVIII July, 1950 No. 9

"FIXED ON THE UNMANIFESTED"

ASSOCIATES of the Theosophical Movement must often wonder what will be the outcome of their endeavors. The ultimate aim is certain, the goal exists, but what of the intermediate results? What of the readers of books, the subscribers to magazines, the audiences at meetings—are they increasing, and are they garnering that for which they reached toward Theosophy and theosophists? Is Theosophy, through theosophists, doing all that can be expected in and for a world so desperately in need of balance, philosophy, hope and confidence?

The questions may be begged (for who can answer categorically such questions as these?), but each theosophist must nevertheless satisfy himself on these points. He must know where and how to look for theosophical results, for a good outcome, for indications that the field is fruitful and the labor not in vain. *The Bhagavad-Gita* may recommend a mistrust of the pairs of opposites, including success and failure, and Krishna may invoke skepticism about the results of action, but Krishna himself was *indefatigable* in action—a quality extremely unlikely, except in one who is as confident of the effectiveness of his efforts as he is of achieving his goal. Conceivably, and perhaps actually, the Theosophical Movement is best served by Krishnas, but a Krishna becomes; he is not created. It might be said that in striving to further the Movement, Arjuna the disciple becomes or recognizes his own Krishna, and for all we know this may be the work—and the object—of the Movement itself.

But between Arjuna and Krishna is a long path: long in our conception because it is not a matter of years which pass by automatically and with undeviating pace. Now, regardless of how years may seem to vary in the psychological impression we have of them, their actual duration is a constant, computed with respect to cosmic activities over which we have no influence. At times, a measure of comfort can be derived from this fact, reminding us, as it does, that whatever happens to one individual, the universe as a whole continues to obey its inherent laws and to pursue its tremendous course. Thinking of the long path of evolution, shall we not adopt a similar time-sense? Our judgment of "progress," like our judgment of the length of the twelve-month cycle, depends upon elements in our own consciousness. The year will complete itself whether or not we tick off the hours for three hundred and sixty-five days; is it not conceivable that the cycles of soul-life are standard in their way, and that we do not need to try counting spiritual minutes?

The Theosophical Movement has to do with spiritual conceptions and perceptions: who has ever seen them arrive in another's mind? Theosophy, when a man enters its spirit and when that spirit takes on a new embodiment in him, is a reconstruction of life and thought: can anyone, even the man himself, chart the redevelopment and clock the various stages of transformation? The very importance of having such records is extremely questionable, since evolution is self-devised by each soul, and the question is futile inasmuch as there seems no possibility of ever acquiring the information. It is a truism, perhaps, to say that the work of the Movement is discerned only by the subtle sight of the subtle-sighted, and yet this is unavoidably so. We may not judge another's spiritual progress, we cannot watch our own—what, then, is observable that is truly significant?

Krishna mentions the path which is not manifest, and which is followed by those able to fix their hearts on the unmanifested. Perhaps we should not dismiss this as poetic license, but instead consider it as an accurate description of a reality in nature. Outward paths exist; so must inner ones. Some itineraries are communicable; others, it is easy to imagine, are not. Courage has a number of evident props; may there not be different and secret sources of strength and hope? A consideration of the springs of enthusiasm in

the Movement will recall to us the truth that the key to spiritual progress is the arousal of spiritual will—and that Will naturally has the whole of nature for its object. Spiritual action is not concerned with the particular results accruing to a few, but with the general beneficence available to all. Spiritual action is therefore not defined according to visible consequences, but with reference to the universality of its motive. The great principle of disinterestedness, the quality which alone permits of the practice of Yoga (skill in the performance of action), is sufficient evidence that spiritual energy manifests most appropriately in projects and plans which aim at something more than "success" and are thus beyond the reach of failure.

Any great work is made up of small works, and the reality of each worker's comprehension of the underlying purpose is to be gauged according to his perception of that purpose *in and through* the small beginnings, the little continuings, and the minute completions. The reading of a book, for example, is a private thing, but each one knows whether he has used the book to focus his own thought and experience, or whether he has moved through it carelessly, hopelessly, hastily, or meaninglessly. A magazine is a recurrent stimulus or a chore; a meeting may be a job, a challenge, a duty, a responsibility, a bore or an affliction—to the individual. Perhaps we need to ask what the book, the magazine and the meeting are in themselves, or potentially. They strike different people in different ways—is there anything more to the originals than the various reactions contain?

The Voice of the Silence would have us "learn that no effort, not the smallest—whether in right or wrong direction—can vanish from the world of causes." Apparently, also, it requires a stronger will to carry enthusiasm and purpose into the simple act than to engage, usually with others, in a large enterprise. Possibly, the imagination must be highly trained to see "in each event a deep, occult significance," but this simply indicates that the theosophist should be about the training of the imagination: "the greatest power, after Will, in the human assemblage of complicated instruments." We return to the *Gita*'s admonitions concerning "results" with more appreciation when we recognize that our imagination is generally "trained" toward the wrong end of our actions. Instead of reaching into the

potentialities of a situation and seeing how much can be built upon the original foundation, we give only an offhand glance at the need and purpose, act superficially, and then plunge into fancies about what should happen *next.*

The true future to be imagined is wrapped up in the cause, and will be only a continuation of the nature of the act. The wise man is not concerned about fanciful futures or misapprehended pasts. The present moment, for him, contains all, for it is rich in duration. Artificial distinctions between actions and reactions have no power to move him from the contemplation of the real causes—aims, motives, ideas.

What will be the outcome of theosophical work? The outcome will never arrive, for the Theosophical Movement has no final goal which, once attained, completes its activity. It is a theosophical movement insofar as its constituent moving parts determine that here and now, wherever and however situated, they will train Imagination and Will upon the means at hand in the fullest possible consciousness of the immutable end *in view.*

The path which is not manifest is travelled not in time but in cycles, and is pursued not by individuals, organizations, or special activities, but by that which is unmanifested in man. The Theosophical Movement is a name given to this path and to the aim and purpose of those for whom the unmanifested is the real. It is not a vague road, nor a leisurely journey. It is a living reality, holding out hope for every human being desirous of becoming the better able to help and teach others. "For those whose hearts are fixed on the unmanifested the labor is greater"—so also are the power, the knowledge, and the responsibility assumed. So must be the trust in Law, in work, in duty, in karma, and in the Self.

THE LIGHT-FORM OF THE SOUL

The spherical form of the soul maintains its figure when it is neither extended towards any object, nor contracted inwards, nor dispersed, nor sinks down, but is illuminated by light, by which it sees the truth, the truth of all things and the truth that is in itself.

—MARCUS AURELIUS

THEOSOPHICAL CORRESPONDENCE CLASS

Work of the Class

A PAPER of general notes and comments on the questions and answers has been sent out to all members. Extracts from that paper are given below. The membership has risen to 300, and includes some Indian Section members. The work has done a great deal of good.

Question Paper No. 1

Question 1. Very well answered in general. The answers varied very much. Very few had a clear idea of what happens at death in regard to the physical body and Prana. When the Linga Sarira and higher principles leave the body, the "lives" which are controlled by the synthesizing power of the Ego during life begin to run riot, and Prana instead of acting in the body as a whole acts in the separate molecules, and thus causes disintegration. Disintegration being effected, Prana rebecomes Jiva.

(c) Man differs from the animals in the possession of Manas, not in the possession of the Triad, for Atma-Buddhi, the Monadic essence, is Universal and therefore in all kingdoms. There is, however, a difference between men and animals in respect to Atma-Buddhi, and that is, that man has a possibility in regard to these principles not possessed by the other kingdoms; he has the power to consciously rise to their plane. Besides Atma-Buddhi, the monadic essence, the principles which are common to all kingdoms are the four lower, *viz.,* Sthula Sarira, Linga Sarira, Prana, and Kama. Kama was omitted in most of the answers, but it is present even in the mineral kingdom, being manifested as chemical affinity. The distinction between the lower kingdoms, then, is not one of principles but rather of activity of the principles. It is understood that all the principles are in all kingdoms in a latent form, but in man Manas is added as active instead of latent. The activity of Prana constitutes

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Note.—Two preceding articles on the "Theosophical Correspondence Class" appeared in last month's issue. The present article was first published in Mr. Judge's *Path* Magazine, August, 1894. No further accounts of the Correspondence Class have been discovered.—Eds.

the distinction between the vegetable and mineral kingdoms; Kama in addition becomes *active* in the animal kingdom, though, as said above, existing on all planes. As we rise from one kingdom to another there is a gradual unfolding of consciousness until in man self-consciousness is attained, this being the function of Manas.

Question 3. Many did not state the objects in full. The greatest omission was in the second object, by omitting the words "and to demonstrate the importance of such study," inasmuch as the study of those religions and philosophies is more important than the religions and philosophies in themselves; for such study reveals truth by presenting its many aspects as seen by different races.

Students should learn these objects word for word and also have a good definition of Theosophy, so that they may be able to give *accurate* information to enquirers and remove misconceptions.

It is interesting to compare the three objects of the T. S. with the three divisions under the heading of "The Higher Life" of the Buddhists. These are:

1. By an unremitting life of active altruism to realize the idea of non-separateness.

2. To substitute a life of study and analysis for all ceremonialism and exoteric worship.

3. To develop the psychic powers latent in man and get knowledge of the existence of subjective potent forces in Nature.

Question Paper No. II

Question 1. (a) Most of the answers to this question were incomplete, many consisting of little more than the simple statement that the seven-fold division is better than the three-fold because it enables us to analyse man's nature more fully. While this is true and is one of the main reasons for the adoption of the seven-fold division, yet as it stands it is only a statement, and we should know what is its basis. It must not be concluded, however, that the three-fold division is an incorrect one, for it can be made to include the whole man; it is simply too general. In this division of body, soul, and spirit, there is no place for hypnotic and spiritualistic phenomena; for, strictly speaking, these have to do in most cases neither with the physical body nor with the soul, and furthermore no full explanation is afforded of after-death states.

To be accurate, the body is only the physical outer covering through which man comes into contact with external nature, and since spirit is Universal, this therefore leaves only *soul* to represent man in his different aspects and varying functions on all the intermediate planes, astral, psychic, and manasic, and to include all the phenomena of thought, will, desire, and sensation. Hence, leaving out the body, there is only one word to represent both the permanent and the impermanent parts of man's nature, and hence again a confusion arises between the illusory and the real, so that there is no true knowledge of what part of our nature should be cultivated and what part repressed. It is here that the advantage of the seven-fold division is apparent, for it enables us to give to *sensation* and *desire* their true places and to recognize to what extent they are necessary. It therefore enables us to know what man truly is and what is necessary for his highest development. Moreover, the seven-fold division shows man's relation to the other kingdoms of Nature and to the whole Universe. It is only by a consideration of this division that the facts of evolution can be accounted for, and only in this way is it possible to fully understand the distinctions existing between the different kingdoms of Nature. The seven-fold division allows for the progression from plane to plane, and links man to the whole of Nature.

(c) Some of the answers were very good, but by many the real idea of the question was not grasped. These stated that the metaphysical basis was the Absolute, or Parabrahm. While of course this is the One Reality that underlies everything, yet from such a statement we are no nearer understanding the Cosmos than we were before. The references given on the question paper to the *Secret Doctrine*, Vol. I, pp. 269-299, show that the word metaphysical was used in its strict meaning, and a study of the word and its use would be profitable to all. The word Metaphysics is derived from the Greek *meta*—after, and *physica*—physics, from *physis*—nature. It is said that Metaphysics was the name given by Aristotle and his followers to the science of mind and intelligence. According to them, the science of natural bodies, or physics, came first in the order of studies and the science of mind came *after* this; and therefore the latter was called Metaphysics because it came *after* physics. Metaphysics applies to all inquiries seeking to discover the "first prin-

ciples" of the constitution of existing things and particularly of our own nature. In this is included the nature of being and the attributes belonging to it as such, and therefore the metaphysical basis and constitution of the Universe is found in the noumena and the underlying causes of external nature, and in their relationship one to the other. In the metaphysics of the Esoteric Philosophy, Thought itself is considered a reality. Back of all manifestation is *Idea.* The whole manifested Universe is the expression of Thought. "Everything that *is, was,* and *will be,* eternally IS, even the countless forms which are finite and perishable only in their objective, not their *ideal,* form. They existed as Ideas in the Eternity, and, when they pass away, will exist as reflections." The Universe is worked and guided from within outwards. The phenomenal is transitory, impermanent, and therefore illusory; the noumenal is the permanent, and therefore the real. (*Secret Doctrine,* Vol. I, p. 282.)

Question 2. (a) Since Manas is the distinctive principle of Man, "lower man" must mean "lower Manas" in connection with the "lower nature" which, generally speaking, consists of those parts of our nature which are dissipated after death and which cannot be retained by the Ego. These are the instruments or vehicles through which the lower man acts and by means of which he comes into contact with external nature. More particularly the lower nature is Kama and the Astral body, for the physical body may be omitted since it neither feels nor acts of itself. The seats of sensation are in the Astral body; the physical is merely an instrument; to a great extent it is the result of Kama and is formed upon the model of the Astral.

(b) Kama is the middle principle in the septenary classification, and in conjunction with Lower Manas, or Kama-Manas, is the dominant principle in the humanity of to-day as a whole. Kama-Manas may be said to be the man as we know him, the personal man who stands at the middle point of the ladder of evolution, attracted upwards by his Higher Ego and pulled downwards by his lower nature. It is only through and by means of Kama that Lower Manas can act, hence the importance of an understanding of this principle. In the animal kingdom Kama is the highest active principle, acting normally and naturally according to laws; but in man it may become perverted, since in him to desire is added reason. Kama-Manas gives

man power to become a god or a devil, or worse than a beast. It is only when Manas is developed, giving the power to reason, analyze, and choose, that the normal line of nature's evolution can be departed from, and that it is possible to work, as it were, contrary to Nature when that is considered mindless. Hence if Kama is allowed to rule in Man, his evolution is retarded; it is only by dominating and ruling Kama that he can rise spiritually, but if he does not awaken in himself the desire for spiritual things, he will be dragged downwards.

(c) The three qualities of nature were well described in general, but their relation to higher and lower man was not clearly given in the majority of answers. Of course this relation may be looked at from different points of view, and hence it would change accordingly, but the key-note seems to be given in Chapter XIV of the *Bhagavad-Gita.* It is the three qualities that bring back the soul to rebirth; the Sattva, through attachment to knowledge and that which is pleasant; the Rajas, through the consequences produced from action; and Tamas, through heedless folly, sleep, and idleness. "And when the embodied self surpasseth these three qualities of goodness, action, and indifference, which are coexistent with the body, it is released from rebirth and death, old age and pain, and drinketh of the water of immortality." If we inquire which of the human principles it is that binds man to rebirth, we find it is Kama swaying Manas, and we may see a direct correspondence between the three qualities and the relations existing between Kama and Manas; Rajas will correspond to the principle Kama considered generally as the basis of all action; Sattva will correspond to Kama dominated and ruled by Manas; and Tamas to Kama when Manas is its slave, debased and degraded. The other references in the *Bhagavad-Gita* to the three qualities also support this view. It is Kama that connects the Ego or real man with the lower principles and with earthly life and nature. Kama and the three qualities are the link between Man and Nature. In the ordinary man now one, now another, of the qualities is uppermost; in the majority the Rajas quality prevails, but by a right use of this quality the Sattva may be reached. By constant effort we may acquire more and more of the Sattva quality of light and truth until it is the main-spring in our lives, and from this we may pass to the mastery of all the qualities and so escape rebirth.

Question 3. (a) (b) (c) The only point that it is necessary to refer to here is in regard to the sequence of, and relations between, the objects of the T. S.

The first has to do with right conduct, with ethics, and is for all; it is the one object that has to be subscribed to by all members and that all should endeavor to carry out. It has to do with our everyday life in the world, and should enter into all our relations with others.

The second and third objects, however, cannot be followed by everyone. Not everyone can take up the study of philosophy or of the deeper science of Man and Nature. Universal Brotherhood is a fact in and a law of Nature, and it is man's blindness to this that causes all the suffering and misery in the world. The origin, spiritual and physical, of the whole of humanity and of Nature is One, their destiny is also One. There is abundance of evidence from all sides to show that "no man liveth unto himself," and it should be our aim as members of the T. S. to make ourselves acquainted with this evidence, and in this way fit ourselves to help on the movement. A pursuit of the second object supplies another argument for the Brotherhood of Man. From it we discover the identity of source of all the great world-religions, and are led to an acknowledgment of the fountain-head of all, the Wisdom-Religion. Furthermore it supplies that element in the life of man which Western thought has failed to give, *viz.,* a knowledge of the Soul and of the possibilities of consciousness on the inner, spiritual planes.

The first object teaches right living based on the fundamental relation of man to man; the second leads us to right thinking, it gives us a knowledge of ourselves; the third is the application of that knowledge to the hidden side of nature and the inner life of man; it is the preliminary step in occultism. The first and second objects are rightly preliminary to the third; before the student can safely take up the third object, he must first learn unselfishness, the living for others, the practical side of Universal Brotherhood; he must acquire charity of thought, impartiality, and freedom from bias, and be able to recognize Truth in whatever garb it may be presented; then he can rightly turn to Nature and seek to know her secrets and those of his own inner being.

The relation between Theosophy and Occultism was not clearly given in some instances. Properly speaking, Theosophy in its fullest

sense includes Occultism, for it is the Wisdom-Religion and must include all knowledge; but as generally understood Theosophy is the presentation of Truth about Man and Nature; Occultism is the science of the hidden forces in Man and Nature and the development of latent powers. Theosophy is a collection of Truths, it is the statement of Truth, but if a student would verify this statement he must become an Occultist; real proof can be obtained in no other way.

"The Needful Training"

Enq. Do the Adepts really know more than we do of Re-incarnation and after-death states?

Theo. They do, indeed. By the training of faculties we all possess, but which they alone have developed to perfection, they have entered in spirit these various planes and states we have been discussing. For long ages, one generation of Adepts after another has studied the mysteries of being, of life, death, and re-birth, and all have taught in their turn some of the facts so learned.

Enq. And is the production of Adepts the aim of Theosophy?

Theo. Theosophy considers humanity as an emanation from divinity on its return path thereto. At an advanced point upon the path, Adeptship is reached by those who have devoted several incarnations to its achievement. For, remember well, no man has ever reached Adeptship in the Secret Sciences in one life; but many incarnations are necessary for it after the formation of a conscious purpose and the beginning of the needful training. Many may be the men and women in the very midst of our Society who have begun this uphill work toward illumination several incarnations ago, and who yet, owing to the personal illusions of the present life, are either ignorant of the fact, or on the road to losing every chance in this existence of progressing any farther. They feel an irresistible attraction toward occultism and the *Higher Life,* and yet are too personal and self-opinionated, too much in love with the deceptive allurements of mundane life and the world's ephemeral pleasures, to give them up; and so lose their chance in their present birth. But, for ordinary men, for the practical duties of daily life, such a far-off result is inappropriate as an aim and quite ineffective as a motive.

—H. P. Blavatsky

BASKET OF FIRE

THE ideas men have about the Soul cannot be held in secret. Thoughts, great and small, declare themselves each moment through every fiber of one's being. Therefore, if the individual could dwell on one of the noble symbols used in ancient times to represent Soul, all the wondrous magic would flow into his nature and assist him. His attachment to personal identity would disappear, as the "mystic power of ideation" began to work. Simple directions for drawing upon the efficacy of a symbol have been set down by William Q. Judge in reply to a question on Faith. He wrote, "formulate to yourself certain things as true that you feel to be true, and then increase your faith in them."

So it is with symbols. Mankind has a rich heritage of self-knowledge but it fails to claim its legacy because it has become insensible to the fact of Man as a spiritual being, a "spark of Eternity." Too seldom today do we hear of the care of the Soul, while in the body! Some people imagine it to be an entity which comes on the scene at death, rescues man from annihilation and confers immortality. During a lifetime this alter-ego is presumed to have little to do with active man, for he is his body and no task exists for Soul.

Ancient Egyptians knew otherwise. They understood Man to *be* a Soul and represented him in their hieroglyphics as an imperishable Basket of Fire.

The Secret Doctrine teaches that our earth and man are the product of three Fires: "the electric fire, the Solar fire, and the fire produced by friction." These are Spirit, Soul, and Body. "Electric fire" is the occult or Fohatic power, "the ever-present electrical energy and ceaseless destructive and formative power." Solar fire is the vast spiritual energy flowing from the host of Gods who have the Sun as their dwelling place. The "Fire of friction" is the union of spiritual discernment and mind in man.

When spirit and matter meet, friction is produced in the critical area of the mind—the balance principle which ignites the dual nature of man, higher and lower, flame and fuel, and welds them into a self-conscious unit. Mind is the link between the god-like

spirit above and the personal below, a spark from the Torch of Truth for awakening sleeping fires in younger Souls—the Torch held by the Elder Brothers who have already gone through the process ages upon ages before in other worlds. The gift of the Elder Brothers is symbolized in the epic of Prometheus who brought the light of self-knowledge to humanity, liberating it from the tyranny of ignorance. But mind is not fully active in the present evolutionary period, and it has yet to consume the fuel of the lower constituents of being, especially desire, ere they consume the mind.

"Fire is the most perfect and unadulterated reflection, in Heaven as on Earth, of the One Flame. It is Life and Death, the origin and the end of every material thing." Fire on this plane is said to be the lowest aspect of divine substance. No wonder the bodies of Masters are likened to radiant matter, strongly electric and magnetic! Every principle of the Elder Brothers is so enkindled that the radiation of Their Presence affects those about Them, increasing vibrations and attracting influences sacrificial or destructive. Staunch souls are they who can take the brilliant fire of the Great Teachers and turn it to its wonted purposes. Their essence ignites the minds of those who volunteer to be sacrificial "baskets" to carry Truth to others, and the process becomes two-fold. Students who willingly devote their lives to Masters' Cause not only carry the Flame but become purified themselves. That the Flame already burns in the heart of every individual, however low it may be, is affirmed by the Soul's longing, and Its power to choose.

Who will undertake to become a conscious carrier of spiritual knowledge? It requires fearlessness, patience, and silence. Firm and igneous must be the fuel for transformation into Light!

Death and Rebirth

I have a strong longing to get away from here. The spirits of old times do not allow me here a single happy hour. . . . How good it is that man dies, precisely to extinguish the expressions, and comes back bathed.

The soul of man is like the water: from the sky it comes, to the sky it ascended, and down again to earth it is forced, eternally changing. —Goethe

EXTENSIONS OF EVIDENCE

The Nature of Light

IN a letter to Mr. Sinnett, written from Ostend in 1887, Mme. H. P. Blavatsky mentioned that her Teacher was dictating a good deal of material for *The Secret Doctrine* which she was then writing, about "one Grove, F.R.S." When the two volumes were published in 1888, it was found that "one Grove" was Sir William Grove, F.R.S., who, besides having been a Judge of the High Court, was professor of Natural Science at the London Institution. Students of *The Secret Doctrine* will be familiar with the citations from Sir William Grove's work, *Correlations of the Physical Forces* (1846), consisting of lectures given by him at the Institution in 1842. According to H. P. Blavatsky, one of the Adepts said of Grove that "his occult insight was remarkable." In these notes, special attention is paid to his views on Light. He showed in his first lecture that "light, heat, etc., etc. are *affections* of matter itself, and not a distinct ethereal, 'imponderable,' fluid, (a state of matter *now*) permeating it" (*S.D.* I, 484). In the striking words of the esoteric teaching: "Light and heat are the ghost or shadow of matter in motion" (*S.D.* I, 515).

Just over a hundred years after Sir William Grove's lectures, Prof. E. N. da C. Andrade, F.R.S. (Quain Professor of Physics, London University) has given an address at the same Royal Institution (Feb. 17, 1950) on the subject of the properties of Light. He told his audience that the fundamental question which men of science had long discussed was whether light was, in essence, a kind of wave motion or a kind of subtle particle. Was the more appropriate simple illustration a ripple on the surface of water or a discharge of shot from a gun? What was the theory which would best account for the experimental facts found in the laboratory? The great problem today (Prof. Andrade said) was to reconcile the fact that

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NOTE.— H. P. Blavatsky took pains to extend the "theosophical view" as far into the literature, the culture, the science, and the scholarship of the time as impartial investigations in the various fields would permit. Students of Theosophy are therefore on the lookout for other corroborative testimony on the philosophy, as new avenues of thought open up among modern thinkers. "Extensions of Evidence" aims to scan common grounds whereon the theosophist may meet the mind of the race. The series began in the January, 1950, issue.

while light in many ways behaved like a wave motion it also behaved like particles, in that the light energy appeared to be delivered in discrete packets or quanta. It was usually recognized that the phenomena of interference, diffraction and polarization showed that light was a transverse wave motion. On the other hand, peculiar features of the action of light in releasing electrons from metals (the photo-electric effect) pointed to a particle nature of light.

The development of the theory of light during the nineteenth century was summarised in a radio address over the British Broadcasting system a few weeks later. The speaker was the Assistant Director of the Observatory at Cambridge University (Dr. E. H. Linfoot):

> At the beginning of the century Young and Fresnal showed that the observed phenomena could be explained by supposing that light consisted of periodic trains of transverse waves similar to those in an elastic solid. During the next fifty years strenuous efforts were made to find out more about the nature of this hypothetical solid, which had been christened "the luminiferous ether." In consequence, the mathematical theory of elasticity made great strides, but the desired goal was not attained, and in fact the difficulties seemed to become more serious as knowledge increased. However, in 1860 Maxwell brought out his electromagnetic theory, in which light consists of electromagnetic vibrations of very short wavelength. This cut away the accumulated tangle of perplexities by removing the ether from the realm of ordinary solid matter altogether and putting it into a category by itself. Efforts to find out something about its true nature continued unabated, but with a growing suspicion that an essential point was being overlooked. This search led at the turn of the century to two unexpected discoveries, the second of which was nothing less than shattering.

The first discovery (Dr. Linfoot said) was that a moving body does not communicate its motion to the ether which surrounds it, or even to the ether between its own particles, thus accentuating the distinction between ether and matter. The second discovery was that the velocity of light relative to the earth is the same whether or not the earth is moving relative to the ether. This contradiction of the observed change in the direction of the light coming from the fixed stars caused by the orbital motion of the

earth, was only resolved in 1905 by the theory of relativity, "according to which the perceived space and time of one observer differ from that of another in motion relative to the first."

In Prof. Andrade's view, there is a scientific solution to the paradox of light behaving as a wave motion and as quanta:

> The solution of the paradox is that whenever we observe wave phenomena we are dealing with light energies that are equivalent to millions, or millions of millions, of particles. We can, then, regard the wave properties as expressing average behaviour or as expressing probabilities—the likelihood that we shall find a large or a small number of particles at a given spot. The behaviour of a single particle we can never fully determine, a fact expressed in the so-called uncertainty principle.
>
> (London *Times,* Feb. 18, 1950.)

To a layman, this reconciliation would seem to be like life itself, full of uncertainties and probabilities, and to possess none of that assurance which we have been accustomed to believe is associated with the processes of scientific thought. We are forced to take refuge in what Prof. Andrade described as the essence of the uncertainty principle, "that the mere act of trying to determine the behaviour of an individual particle altered its behaviour." Verily, we are here in the realm of meta-physics.

In this impasse, it might be suggested that "To know what is light, and whether it is an actual substance or a mere undulation of the 'ethereal medium,' Science has first to learn what are in reality Matter, Atom, Ether, Force" (*S.D.* I, 482). Certainly, the arrival of the quantum theory devised by Planck in 1900, improved and elaborated as this has been by Einstein, Bohr, Heisenberg, and others, may be said to herald also the admission of the substantial nature of light, regarded as a force. And did not Sir William Crookes, in effect, weigh light with his invention of the radiometer in 1874, brought about by the heating of its vanes by light? Equally with Prof. Andrade, occultists do not deny the validity also of the vibratory theory: "Only, they limit its functions to our Earth—declaring its inadequacy on other planes than ours, since 'Masters' in the Occult Sciences perceive the CAUSES that produce ethereal vibrations" (*S.D.* I, 514). To determine fully the behaviour of a single particle, and to go beyond the average "probabilities" mentioned by Professor Andrade, it will be necessary to question more closely

than has been done hitherto those postulates relating to the structure of matter and the nature of force which are the very foundation of the physical sciences. For the truth is that "Nearly three thousand years ago, earlier than the days of Pythagoras, the ancient philosophers claimed that light was ponderable—hence *matter,* and that light was force" (*Isis Unveiled,* I, 281).

Unapparent Ascetics

It is not that among the *Hatha* Yogins—men who at times had reached through a physical and well-organised system of training the highest powers as "wonder-workers"—there has never been a man worthy of being considered as a true Yogin. What we say, is simply this: the *Raja Yogin* trains but his mental and intellectual powers, leaving the physical alone, and making but little of the exercise of phenomena simply of a physical character. Hence it is the rarest thing in the world to find a real Yogi boasting of being one, or willing to exhibit such powers—though *he does acquire them as well as the one practising Hatha Yoga, but through another and far more intellectual system.* Generally, they deny these powers pointblank, for reasons but too well-grounded. The latter need not even belong to any apparent order of ascetics, and are oftener known as private individuals than members of a religious fraternity, nor need they necessarily be Hindus. Kabir, who was one of them, fulminates against most of the later sects of mendicants who occasionally become warriors when not simply brigands, and sketches them with a masterly hand:—

"I never beheld such a *Yogi,* Oh, brother! who forgetting his doctrine roves about in negligence. He follows professedly the faith of MAHADEVA and calls himself an eminent teacher; the scene of his abstraction is the fair or market. MAYA is the mistress of the false saint. When did DATTATRAYA demolish a dwelling? When did SUKHADEVA collect an armed host? When did NARADA mount a matchlock? When did VYASADEVA blow a trumpet?" etc.

—H. P. BLAVATSKY

The Theosophist, November, 1880

THEOSOPHICAL PRIMARIES

I

WE find ourselves in the midst of a vast evolution, with beings of many grades still below us—lower in point of consciousness and intelligence than ourselves—as also we ought to see there must be beings above us far greater than we are. All these beings have sprung from a common Source; all differ seemingly, yet there exists, supreme in all, the same power to perceive, to know, to learn.

We have to understand the reason for the differences in beings and for our own limitations. Let us, then, seek out the beginnings of things—for everything that exists had a beginning, and, of course, everything that had a beginning will have an ending. If our beginning was with this life only, the end of this life would be our complete extinction; then we would have no concern with anything else. But there is knowledge that extends prior to this birth and beyond this life, and in that hidden knowledge we may get the clue to an understanding of, not only our own natures, but the nature of all beings everywhere.

Our first firm basis is in the perception that all knowledge must lie in and be sustained by the common Source of which we are a part and an expression. That common Basis could not be any supreme Being, for "Being" means finiteness and limitation, and outside of it must still be that which is not contained. We have to go far back of all beings and creations and creatures to that Cause which lies behind all life, all consciousness, all spirit, all being. *That* is not different in any being. IT is the same in all, so must be the essential Divinity in all beings of every grade. There is one Absolute Principle which is the origin, the sustainer, the container, of all that ever was, is, or shall be. We call it a Principle, because to name It is to define It, to limit It, to belittle It. To endeavor to give It attributes of any kind is a limitation, and we must go back

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NOTE.—This article is collated from the writings of Robert Crosbie, as contained in *The Friendly Philosopher*.—Eds. THEOSOPHY.

of all limitations if we are to understand the Omnipresent and Immortal in us and in all things.

Our search for knowledge is almost universally a looking for something outside. We are looking for information, for instruction, in the thoughts of other men, in the ideas of other peoples, which, in this school of Occult Knowledge, is not knowledge at all. The only *knowledge* we can have is that which we gain for ourselves, and within ourselves, as actual experience. External facts and information can never give us any understanding whatever of the higher, more divine parts of our nature.

* * * * *

To most people the word "religion" signifies something separate from human existence, and presents the idea of preparation for some unknown future existence. Some religions are based upon the knowledge of an individual who laid the foundation for them; others are believed to be the revelations of a Supreme Being at the time of the creation of the world. Each people has a God of its own; so many peoples, so many Supreme Beings corresponding to the mental ideas of the people. And so with individuals—as the ideas of men differ widely—so many individuals, so many Gods. All these Gods or Supreme Beings are the creations of men, and not facts in themselves. But back of all those ideas does lie a Reality. The very power that resides in man to create images and endow them with virtues which he does not possess points to something greater than the things created. The creatures cannot be greater than the creators. That which in man creates ideas is greater than any idea he may at any time have held or now holds. We have, then, to get back of all ideas to find the true "God"—the true religion.

True religion must give us a basis for thinking, and consequently, a basis for acting; it must give us an understanding of nature, of ourselves and of other beings. Religion is a *bond* uniting men together—not a particular set of dogmas or beliefs—binding not only all Men, but also all Beings and all *things* in the entire Universe, into one grand whole. Just that basis and that bond are presented in the three fundamental propositions of *The Secret Doctrine*.

* * * * *

We can call the Highest Power any name we choose—the Supreme, the Self—so long as we do not limit It, or give It attributes. We may not say "It is pleased," nor angry, nor rewards, nor punishes; doing so, we limit It. If Space itself cannot be measured or limited, how can we limit the Supreme? The Highest Power cannot be less than Space. Even to name It is to limit It; yet It must be the One Reality, the One Sustainer, the One Cause of all existences, the One Knower, the One Experiencer, in all directions and in every thing. This proposition drives us back to the very basis of all thought—the power to think, itself—the power which is in each and every being.

There is one realization which immediately sets our minds in order: it is of That in us which is unchangeable and unchanging. We *are* that Spirit in very essence; all that has been in our past lives and in our present life, all that will in future be, proceeds from the power of that Spirit itself, and is sustained by the power of that Spirit itself. There is nothing apart from us. Nature does not exist separate and apart from us. The laws of nature are but the interrelations and interdependence of all the beings concerned in this stream of evolution. The forces of nature do not exist of themselves. There never was a force of any kind that was not the result of intelligent action. We as spiritual beings are eternally creating forces; for every man's brain and every thought has a dynamic power. Are they lost? No: all the thoughts, all the feelings of all the beings in the universe, provide a store of dynamic energy which constitutes the forces, as we know them, of nature. We draw upon that general reservoir of force in accordance with the ideas held and in accord with our present inward nature. All the time we are adding to the powers of nature for good or for evil. So, too, we are taking from the powers of nature the additions which other beings have put in—the forces which other beings have aroused in nature.

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If we ask ourselves individually, "What do I mean by the term God?" perhaps we would all say: "The highest there is." But do we mean the highest there is? Do we mean that great power which sustains all beings, all forms, that which by its very nature and by our contemplation of it must appear as infinite, as eternal, as change-

less? If we do mean that, then we shall have to amend a great many other ideas which generally connote with the term God. For instance, we shall have to leave the idea of a *being* entirely outside of our calculations. We have thought that the source and sustainer of all things, all beings, from all time and in all time, is a being; that the something in us which reaches up beyond everything physical, beyond everything thinkable, is outside ourselves. How could that possibly be? How could we possibly prove that this God is a being existing in some far-off heaven unknown to us and separate from us? How can we imagine a being as omnipresent, and at the same time separate from us or from anything? If Deity is infinite and omnipresent, there is not a grain of sand nor a point of vacant space anywhere where Deity is not. And how again can we give to the idea of Deity, attributes—such as being angry or pleased, rewarding or punishing, since every attribute that we give is a limitation and precludes the idea of omnipresence? No *being* could be the origin, the sustainer, the source of all that was, is or ever shall be. Any being, however great, is contained and limited in space; no *being* CAN be omnipresent.

There *is* that which is beyond speech, beyond description, and beyond conception—the highest there is in the universe. But are we to look outside in the heavens, in the sea, in the secret places of the earth, in any place whatever; or are we to find it in a much nearer place, that is, within ourselves? For all that anyone can know of God, or the Highest, is what he knows in himself, through himself and by himself. There is no other place of knowledge for us. Yet at the same time we have to perceive that God, or Deity, is not absent from anything, is immanent in the whole, is omnipresent, is at the root and is the seed of every being of every kind anywhere; that there is no thing, not even a grain of sand nor a speck of dust, no point in space, absent from that Source which sustains the whole manifested universe. We can imagine, then, that God, as the ancients put it, "seated in the hearts of all beings"; for there is something in the heart of man whence proceeds all feeling, all true life, all true conception. The heart is not the same as the head—a man's heart may be right and sound and his head wrong. The feeling of the true in the heart is not deceived by this thought or that thought or the other thought; it can only be experienced by each

one for himself within himself. God is not an outside God, but is to be sought in the very innermost recesses of our own nature—in the silent chamber, the temple, within us—and nowhere else.

* * * * *

The life in each of us is the Universal Life. Many imagine that Life means existence in a physical body, and that only; that outside of physical existence there is no life. But Life includes all things and forms from the highest spiritual down to life in its grossest form; it is the same Life all through, common to all. It is the One Life, the One Spirit in each and all, so that in each being of every grade there lies the potentiality of All-Being. There is that in each which is beginningless and endless, which is changeless; and That, though illimitable, invisible, inconceivable, can be *realized* by every human being.

Some illustrations will bring this fact forcibly to our minds. We speak of ourselves, of our identity. We say, "I was a child; when I was a young man or woman; when I was middle-aged; as I am today; as I will be in the future." Now, what is That, itself unchanged, which is going through all those changes? The same "I," the same *identity.* That does not change. The body changes, the ideas—the mind—change, the surroundings change. But the Man himself, the identity, remains unchanged through all these changes of body, scene and circumstance.

Again, take the power of seeing: we all have that power, and no matter how much we exercise it, it still remains the power to perceive. It is not changed by what we see. And we may consider this: that change cannot see change. Only that which is permanent can see change. So there is that in us which is permanent, which is Real, which is of the highest, which is a ray from and one with the Supreme, the universal Principle or Power, the creator, the sustainer, the regenerator of all that was, is, or ever shall be. We have to *realize* That—each one for himself—first by recognizing that IT IS, omnipresent, eternal, boundless and immutable; second, by divesting ourselves of those things we thought It to be: that It is this body, this mind, these circumstances. All these are changing things, things seen; but that which is the Real, the Supreme, our very Self and

the Self of all things, is not subject to change; It is changeless; It cannot be seen, for It is the Perceiver.

The true ideas of the ancient philosophy relieve us of two misconceptions: one, the idea that there is a revengeful God who punishes us for those things that we are unable to prevent ourselves from doing; and second, the idea of a Devil to whom we are consigned if we do not follow the lines that some people have laid down for us. A knowledge of Theosophy enables us to understand that there never was any "creation," in the sense of making something out of nothing; but that everything—every being of every kind—has *evolved,* and is still evolving. The beings below us are evolving to our estate, where the beings, now evolved so far beyond us, some time in the distant past went through a similar stage. All beings are what they are through evolution from within outwards, that evolution proceeding under Law.

If we are ever going to know anything of the common Source of all our being and of all our powers, we have to gain that knowledge within ourselves. For no one is separate from It; each one springs from the same Supreme, is one with It in his innermost nature. The idea is beyond any conception of the Deity as people hold God today, or that has been popularly held in the past.

The Supreme is beyond form. It is beyond expression. Where is the man who can say what That is within himself which sees, which knows, which feels, which experiences, which garners the results of all experience? Each one is of that Infinite Source, because all have the same infinite root; each one is an expression of It.

If a man does not understand what his real Source is, what his real nature is, and assumes himself to be that which he is not, then all his exercise of the power to think, all his creative thoughts, all his subsequent actions, will follow the lines of his wrong basis of thought and action. If he thinks he is a poor miserable sinner who cannot do anything of himself and for himself, then a poor, miserable sinner he will remain. But if he realizes that all the effects which surround him are due to thinking, that he can create better effects, that all things are within his reach, he will gain a new insight and a greater strength. He gets beyond effects to the field of causes, and begins to realize that all things are alike in essential nature. He finds from that consideration that the universe is *under Law.*

YOUTH-COMPANIONS ASK—

WHEN *one is working with children, he often finds that although the child may see the rightness of a particular course of action, he will not follow it because it would make him different from the other children around him, his school friends, etc. Is this tendency to conformity a natural one, and is there any way to help the child overcome it when necessary?*

If we look at the problem from the viewpoint of the development of the ego's various principles, we may conclude that the tendency to conformity is a natural one for the child. It must be that with the taking on of each new body, the ego has progressively to work through and finally to gain control to some degree of each of his various instruments, recapitulating that larger evolutionary process by which every Round and Race develops and perfects its particular principle. The first to come under control is the physical body, and during the second and third "seven" of the person's life, the kamic principle usually predominates.

The kamic principle is the source of much of our desire to be like other people, and to feel the way they feel. In the years when the feeling nature is in supremacy over reason and the dictates of conscience, the child may abandon the path that reason dictates, and follow the feelings and attitudes he holds in common with others.

Then, too, when we say that the child "sees the rightness" of a certain course of action, what do we mean? Do we not often mean that he acquiesces more or less passively to a line of reasoning traced out by some adult who to an extent sways him into an expression of the desired attitude? But the child needs more than this, if he is to be expected to give more than lip service to a moral concept. In fact, unless he actually sees and is positively *drawn* to that conviction by the power of his own awakening perceptions, it is better that he continue to act as he *honestly* wants to, rather than that he get the habit of aping moral gestures.

If the child does really seem convinced that a certain thing is right to do, yet fails to do it for fear of standing out from other children, we needn't be too hard on him for that, for many adults have never overcome that fear, either. But if we can help the child to leap over that hurdle *once,* he will find it easier forever after-

wards to do so whenever his sense of right and the fitness of things demands it. The habit of conformity probably grows stronger with the years, as does any other habit, so the earlier its hold can be loosened, the better. In overcoming this habit the child can make good use of his "heroes," whether they be alive and around him, or known to him only through books and stories. At any rate, he need never feel that by not following along with the crowd, he is left completely *alone,* for he becomes one of an unseen company of those who always try to act for the right and the true, regardless of the consequences.

In the GITA, *Krishna makes much of the need for a man to be able to remain unmoved in the face of pain as well as pleasure, to be unaffected by this pair of opposites. How are we to make a start in this direction? It seems almost impossible to comply with this rule even in regard to physical pain, let alone the deeper mental or emotional sorrows.*

To start with, we must realize that doing away with physical pain, in the sense of remaining unaffected by it, may not necessarily be the first and easiest step in the achievement of the *Gita's* recommendation. If we can have no attachment for what we do not think about, then we will surmount physical pain to the degree that we instruct our minds to surmount the physical body as a prime focus of our sense of identity.

As for making a start, it is a truism to say that this should be done in the smaller events first, until greater strength is acquired. We cannot hope to maintain our equilibrium in the face of a great sorrow unless we have taught ourselves to maintain serenity through lesser storms. Nor are these "lesser storms" necessarily so easy to ride through. For instance, what more exquisite "pain" can we encounter than that which arises from our irritation at some person whom we find annoying or displeasing? If we could overcome that "pain," and cease to dwell on it, we would have gained a great and ever-useful strength. Or, to take the case of pleasure, are we able to maintain the integrity of our judgment in considering something brought up by someone whom we like, whose manner pleases us, and whom we are temperamentally pre-disposed to agree with? These are more important exercises in "detachment" than cultivating

the ability to go through a grueling hour in the dentist's chair without twitches or jerks, or even a little honest agony.

By what right do we say that only humans can think and speak? It has always seemed to me somewhat presumptuous to assume that, when we know so little about animals and their means of communication.

It may be said without fear of contradiction that only human beings possess the power of speech as we use that term. No known animal approaches the intricacies of the spoken *word* (as distinguished from sound) that mark the efforts of human beings to communicate ideas and feelings to one another. This does not mean, however, that other forms of life do not possess, in varying degree, the power of communicating with their fellows.

H. P. Blavatsky wrote in regard to the ant (*Transactions,* pp. 13-4): "Now, in relation to its own plane of conception and perception, the ant has as good an intellect as we have ourselves, and a better one; for though it cannot express it in words, yet, over and above instinct, the ant shows very high reasoning powers, as all of us know. . . . If a scientist could become an ant for a while, and think as an ant, and remember his experience on returning to his own sphere of consciousness, then only would he know something for certain of this interesting insect."

Of far more importance than the actual question of whether animals think, or how they think, are the *implications* of the problem. Those who have the heritage of a pantheistic philosophy have a natural respect for all beings and creatures, whether stone or bush, animal or human being. On the other hand, Western peoples have been led to recognize no other plane of consciousness than the human (except that of heaven and hell, which two are limited to human beings, also) and the rest of the universe is a living, but not significant creation. The statement that animals cannot think or speak may strike the questioner adversely since it is so often used as a conscious or unconscious rationalization of man's exploitation of the lower kingdoms. Thus may be seen the teaching of the various planes and states of consciousness possible in the universe —not as an empty abstraction, but as a key to open many minds to a perception of universal brotherhood.

NOTES ON THE BHAGAVAD GITA

by SUBBA ROW

I

[Subba Row's article, first published in *The Theosophist,* February, 1887, appears here in a considerably abbreviated version, extracts being chosen to bring out the subject of the seven principles, which was the theme to which H. P. Blavatsky addressed herself in later articles to be reprinted in this series. Subba Row's discussion would seem, to students of H.P.B.'s *Secret Doctrine* and of Wm. Q. Judge's Gita rendition and Notes, a needlessly extended and wearisomely labored exposition. The speaker (these articles were originally Convention lectures at Adyar, December, 1886) apparently had little confidence in his hearers' intuitive faculties; consequently, he set up an intellectual apparatus to "sustain" his points which all but obscures his own vital perceptions. Readers will be interested to compare H.P.B.'s treatment of the subject of the three Upadhis, *S.D.* I, 153, 158, 181, and II, 593 fn. (An Introductory lecture by Subba Row was reprinted in THEOSOPHY last month.)—Eds. THEOSOPHY.]

BEFORE I proceed further, let me tell you that I do not mean to adopt the sevenfold classification of man that has up to this time been adopted in Theosophical writings generally. * * * No doubt the number seven seems to play an important part in the cosmos, though it is neither a power nor a spiritual force; but it by no means necessarily follows that in every case we must adopt that number. What an amount of confusion has this sevenfold classification given rise to! These seven principles, as generally enumerated, do not correspond to any natural lines of cleavage, so to speak, in the constitution of man. Taking the seven principles in the order in which they are generally given, the physical body is separated from the so-called life-principle; the latter from what is called *linga sarira* (very often confounded with *sukshma sarira*). Thus the physical body is divided into three principles. Now here we may make any number of divisions; if you please, you may as well enumerate nerve-force, blood, and bones, as so many distinct parts, and make the number of divisions as large as sixteen or

thirty-five. But still the physical body does not constitute a separate entity apart from the life principle, nor the life principle apart from the physical body, and so with the *linga sarira.*

Again, in the so-called "astral body," the fourth principle when separated from the fifth soon disintegrates, and the so-called fourth principle is almost lifeless unless combined with the fifth. This system of division does not give us any distinct principles which have something like independent existence. And what is more, this sevenfold classification is almost conspicuous by its absence in many of our Hindu books. At any rate a considerable portion of it is almost unintelligible to Hindu minds; and so it is better to adopt the time-honored classification of four principles, for the simple reason that it divides man into so many entities as are capable of having separate existences, and that these four principles are associated with four *upadhis* which are further associated in their turn with four distinct states of consciousness. * * *

I shall point out what position each of these principles occupies in the evolution of nature, and in passing from the First Cause to the organized human being of the present day, I shall give you the basis of the fourfold classification that I promised to adopt.

The first principle, or rather the first postulate, which I have to lay down is the existence of what is called *Parabrahmam.* * * * Is it possible to know anything of the First Cause? No doubt it is possible to know something about it. It is possible to know all about its manifestations, though it is next to impossible for human knowledge to penetrate into its inmost essence and say what it really is in itself. All religious philosophers are agreed that this First Cause is omnipresent and eternal.* Further, it is subject to periods of activity and passivity. When *cosmic pralaya* comes, it is inactive, and when evolution commences, it becomes active.

But even the real reason for this activity and passivity is unintelligible to our minds. It is not matter or anything like matter. It is not even consciousness, because all that we know of consciousness is with reference to a definite organism. What consciousness is or will be when entirely separated from *upadhi* is a thing utterly inconceivable to us, not only to us but to any other intelligence which has the notion of self or ego in it, or which has a distinct individual-

*Compare *Secret Doctrine,* I, 14 fn.

ized existence. Again it is not even *atma.* The word *atma* is used in various senses in our books. It is constantly associated with the idea of self. But *Parabrahmam* is not so associated; so it is not ego, it is not non-ego, nor is it consciousness—or to use a phraseology adopted by our old philosophers, it is not *gnatha,* not *gnanam* and not *gnayam.* Of course every entity in this cosmos must come under one or the other of these three headings. But *Parabrahmam* does not come under any one of them. Nevertheless, it seems to be the one source of which *gnatha, gnanam,* and *gnayam* are the manifestations or modes of existence. * * * All Vedantic writers of old have formulated the principle that *Parabrahman* is the one essence of almost everything in the cosmos. * * *

Now this *Parabrahmam* which exists before all things in the cosmos is the one essence from which starts into existence a centre of energy, which I shall for the present call the *Logos.*

This *Logos* may be called in the language of old writers either *Iswara* or *Pratyagatma* or *Sabda Brahmam.* It is called the *Verbum* or the Word by the Christians, and it is the divine *Christos* who is eternally in the bosom of his father. It is called *Avalokiteswara* by the Buddhists; at any rate, *Avalokiteswara* in one sense is the *Logos* in general, though no doubt in the Chinese doctrine there are also other ideas with which it is associated. In almost every doctrine they have formulated the existence of a centre of spiritual energy which is unborn and eternal, and which exists in a latent condition in the bosom of *Parabrahmam* at the time of *pralaya,* and starts as a centre of conscious energy at the time of cosmic activity. It is the first *gnatha* or the ego in the cosmos, and every other ego and every other self, as I shall hereafter point out, is but its reflection or manifestation. In its inmost nature it is not *unknowable* as *Parabrahmam,* but it is an object of the highest knowledge that man is capable of acquiring. It is the one great mystery in the cosmos, with reference to which all the initiations and all the systems of philosophy have been devised. What it really is in its inmost nature will not be a subject for consideration in my lecture, but there are some stand-points from which we have to look at it to understand the teachings in the Bhagavad Gita.

The few propositions that I am going to lay down with reference to this principle are these. It is not material or physical in its constitu-

tion, and it is not objective; it is not different in substance, as it were, or in essence, from *Parabrahmam,* and yet at the same time it is different from it in having an individualized existence. It exists in a latent condition in the bosom of *Parabrahmam,* at the time of pralaya just, for instance, as the sense of ego is latent at the time of *sushupti* or sleep. It is often described in our books as *satchidanandam,* and by this epithet you must understand that it is *sat,* and that it is *chit* and *anandam.*

It has consciousness and an individuality of its own. I may as well say that it is the only *personal* God, perhaps, that exists in the cosmos. But not to cause any misunderstanding I must also state that such centres of energy are almost innumerable in the bosom of *Parabrahmam.* It must not be supposed that this *Logos* is but a single centre of energy which is manifested by *Parabrahmam.* There are innumerable others. Their number is almost infinite. Perhaps even in this centre of energy called the *Logos* there may be differences; that is to say, *Parabrahmam* can manifest itself as a *Logos* not only in one particular, definite form, but in various forms. * * *

When once this ego starts into existence as a conscious being having objective consciousness of its own, we shall have to see what the result of this objective consciousness will be with reference to the one absolute and unconditioned existence from which it starts into manifested existence. From its objective standpoint, *Parabrahmam* appears to it as *Mulaprakriti.* Please bear this in mind and try to understand my words, for here is the root of the whole difficulty about *Purusha* and *Prakriti** felt by the various writers on Vedantic philosophy. Of course this *Mulaprakriti* is material to it, as any material object is material to us. This *Mulaprakriti* is no more *Parabrahmam* than the bundle of attributes of this pillar is the pillar itself; *Parabrahmam* is an unconditioned and absolute reality, and *Mulaprakriti* is a sort of veil thrown over it. *Parabrahmam* by itself cannot be seen as it is. It is seen by the *Logos* with a veil thrown over it, and that veil is the mighty expanse of cosmic matter. It is the basis of all material manifestations in the cosmos.

Again, *Parabrahmam,* after having appeared on the one hand as the ego, and on the other as *Mulaprakriti,* acts as the one energy

*See *Secret Doctrine,* I, 16, summary.

through the *Logos.* * * * Now we see the first manifestation of *Parabrahmam* is a Trinity, the highest Trinity that we are capable of understanding. It consists of *Mulaprakriti, Iswara* or the *Logos,* and the conscious energy of the *Logos,* which is its power and light; and here we have the three principles upon which the whole cosmos seems to be based. First, we have matter; secondly, we have force—at any rate, the foundation of all the forces in the cosmos; and thirdly, we have the ego or the one root of self, of which every other kind of self is but a manifestation or a reflection. You must bear in mind that there is a clear line of distinction drawn between *Mulaprakriti* (which is, as it were, the veil thrown over *Parabrahmam* from the objective point of view of the *Logos*), and this energy which is radiated from it. * * *

Now bear in mind that this *Mulaprakriti* which is the veil of *Parabrahmam* is called *Avyaktam* in Sankhya philosophy. It is also called *Kutastha* in the Bhagavad Gita, simply because it is undifferentiated; even the literal meaning of this word conveys more or less the idea that it is undifferentiated as contrasted with differentiated matter. This light from the *Logos* is called *Daiviprakriti* in the Bhagavad Gita; it is the Gnostic *Sophia* and the Holy Ghost of the Christians. * * *

To make this clearer, I may point out that this light is symbolized as *Gayatri.* You know *Gayatri* is not *Prakriti.* It is considered as the light of the *Logos,* and in order to convey to our minds a definite image, it is represented as the light of the sun. But the sun from which it springs is not the physical sun that we see, but the central sun of the light of wisdom, hence we do not use in our *sandhyavandanam* any symbol representing the physical sun. This light is further called the *mahachaitanyam* of the whole cosmos. It is the life of the whole of nature. It will be observed that what manifests itself as light, as consciousness, and as force, is just one and the same energy. * * *

As far as we have gone we have arrived at, firstly, *Parabrahmam;* secondly, *Iswara;* thirdly, the light manifested through *Iswara,* which is called *Daiviprakriti* in the Bhagavad Gita, and lastly that *Mulaprakriti* which seems to be, as I have said, a veil thrown over *Parabrahmam.* Now creation or evolution is commenced by the intellectual energy of the *Logos.* The universe in its infinite details and

with its wonderful laws does not spring into existence by mere chance, nor does it spring into existence merely on account of the potentialities locked up in *Mulaprakriti.* It comes into existence mainly through the instrumentality of the one source of energy and power existing in the cosmos, which we have named the *Logos,* and which is the one existing representative of the power and wisdom of *Parabrahmam.* Matter acquires all its attributes and all its powers which, in course of time, give such wonderful results in the course of evolution, by the action of this light that emanates from the *Logos* upon *Mulaprakriti.* From our standpoint, it will be very difficult to conceive what kind of matter that may be which has none of those tendencies which are commonly associated with all kinds of matter, and which only acquires all the various properties manifested by it on receiving, as it were, this light and energy from the *Logos.* This light of the *Logos* is the link, so to speak, between objective matter and the subjective thought of *Iswara.* It is called in several Buddhist books *fohat.* It is the one instrument with which the *Logos* works.

What springs up in the *Logos* at first is simply an image, a conception of what it is to be in the cosmos. This light or energy catches the image and impresses it upon the cosmic matter which is already manifested. Thus spring into existence all the manifested solar systems. Of course the four principles we have enumerated are eternal, and are common to the whole cosmos. There is not a place in the whole cosmos where these four energies are absent; and these are the elements of the four-fold classification that I have adopted in dealing with the principles of the mighty cosmos itself.

Conceive this manifested solar system in all its principles and in its totality to constitute the *sthula sarira* of the whole cosmos. Look on this light which emanates from the *Logos* as corresponding to the *sukshma sarira* of the cosmos. Conceive further that this *Logos* which is the one germ from which the whole cosmos springs,—which contains the image of the universe,—stands in the position of the *karana sarira* of the cosmos, existing as it does before the cosmos comes into existence. And lastly conceive that *Parabrahmam* bears the same relation to the *Logos* as our *atma* does to our *karana sarira.*

COMMUNICATIONS

Stimulation

[The following letter takes up the subject raised in the Communications department in May. Approaching the question of competition from a different vantage-point, the present contribution may in itself call forth further comments, and this would be in accordance with the spirit of this department. However much there may be general agreement on principles, application is an individual matter, "requiring attention every day." The sharing of many views—not in competition, but in cooperation for the sake of a more universal application all around—is a necessary part of the preparation, by study and otherwise, through which the theosophist becomes. It is hoped that many readers will be moved to send in reflections on particular aspects of human experience. —Eds. Theosophy.]

LET'S begin by asking some questions. Why do some people find it necessary to "compete" and others not? Merely to indicate that a competitive spirit does not seem to equate with what is presumed to be the "theosophical attitude" is no answer at all. And yet, some basic feeling tells us that the truly "human" man is not competitive in his relations with other men. Isn't it true, though, that what often passes for "competition" is only the need we all feel for stimulation?

I have known artists, tennis players, housewives, each of whom will plod along in his or her chosen endeavor, more or less methodically, performing in a fairly satisfactory manner. But when another person enters the picture, expressing capabilities in the same field, instantly an arousal takes place. The housewife becomes more conscious of her recipe for preserving apricots; there is discussion back and forth of the efficacy of the method used, and a heightening of the desire to produce the best possible batch of jam. The tennis player likewise begins to wonder about his game; the entrance of a rival with somewhat equal talent spurs him on to achievements he had not reached before, and the competition he meets causes him to receive an added psychic stimulation which all playing-for-its-own-sake cannot offer. And the creative artist, whether he be painter or

musician, poet or dancer, can seldom transcend the level of his "self-induced" effort, without the intrusion into his field of a rival mind. Almost unconsciously to himself, the artist finds himself stimulated in a new way. Probably, he feels the need to "test" his own ideas, his own creations. Can these stand up beside those of his rival? Or has the rival introduced a view which our artist was incapable of seeing before? How much of what he has been doing is merely an imitation of other forms, and how much is an expression of what he really believes?

If, in theosophical terms, the lighting up of Manas is a continual process, it would seem that all further "lighting up" can only come through stimulation from another source, and this stimulation may be by means of instruction or by some direct contact—psychical, mental, or physical. Without such contact, the natural movement of manas tends to settle into an even course, and this placid type of movement often brings with it a sense of sameness and monotony which can only be counteracted by a force in a different direction. Now, it is true that the human mind is capable of self-energized movement, and since that *is* the nature of the higher Manas, it would follow that unless such self-energization flowed from contact with other minds, all stimulation, in and of itself, would leave a man psychically, mentally and physically impoverished.

Stimulation brings with it a sense of "aliveness," a sharpening and focussing of all our powers, and it seems to me that this arousal of our own capacities is often connoted with what is called "competition." Perhaps, with some, this focussing of energy finds its source in an abstract ideal—the Theosophical Movement, let us say—which causes them to exert their greatest effort to make its stream flow into a wide, broad river for all to see and touch; with others, it may be the direct contact of one mind, an immediate experience. I hazard a guess that for the majority of theosophical students it is a little of both.

But competition also has its negative side. For how can you possibly "compete" with someone, unless on the basis of a recognized equality of ability? And as each human being is the product of the action and interaction of his own peculiar karma—mental, psychic, and physical—and as there are no "two blades of grass exactly alike," it would be quite difficult even to find our equal. A

certain similarity in physical training will provide a measure of fairness in a contest, as might be the case with two rival pianists, but, even here, we often find that one is the peerless exponent of Beethoven and the other of Debussy. Even Horowitz is said to have admitted that Earl ("Father") Hines was his superior in Dixieland style!

Because our physical form is the most rigid and least amenable to change or alteration of any of our principles, nature appears to have ordained that equality of physical capacity should be rare indeed. Every student of the subject recognizes that the foremost ballet dancers are born with legs that *naturally* "turn out from the hips"—the prime requisite in ballet. Men with short legs are the most adapted to a hundred-yard dash; those with long legs are more naturally adapted to the mile. This is not to say that physical curtailments cannot be overcome: Rubinstein does not have the type of hand usually associated with a pianist, but you'd never know it from the way he plays the piano. In general, then, for a physical contest to be fair, a measure of equality is needed, as is provided between professionals.

What we all, perhaps, tend to deprecate about the spirit of competition as it exists in Western lands, is that from the viewpoint of Theosophy it so belies the spirit of Pantheism which seems to be implicit in the "theosophical attitude" toward life. How can a man possibly regard as a rival or as a challenger of his attainments, another man whose powers and potentialities stem from the same source as his own? How, from the point of view of the intricacies of individual karmic heritage, can he for one moment feel "superior" for having surpassed another in a specific moment of time? How can he, cognizant of the constantly revolving wheel of rebirth, assume that it is important to be first here, to win there?

Some Medical Advice

Seek truth. Discover causes. Learn how they disturb life and how order is re-established. By science and persuasion preserve men. By science, gentleness, and firmness combat death and reduce suffering. Guide, encourage, and console in a brotherly and tolerant spirit. This is medicine. —Marchand

"THE GITA"—INFORMAL ESSAYS

On Everyday Questions

ONE of the most interesting paradoxes of the third chapter of the *Gita* is also the supreme moral and psychological paradox of all philosophy or psychology. Toward the end of the discourse we find Arjuna expressing a grave concern for the fact that man is often "propelled to commit offences, seemingly without his will and as if constrained by some secret force." Krishna informs Arjuna that it is "lust which instigates him. It is passion, sprung from the quality of *rajas;* insatiable, and full of sin." And then Krishna presumably supplies the remedy. "Therefore, O best of the descendants of Bharata, at the very outset restraining thy senses, thou shouldst conquer this sin. . . ." This seems simple and clear enough, and is a familiar theme of all moral counsels. Krishna is telling Arjuna to fight against those influences which spring from nature.

Yet, but a page previous, Krishna has told Arjuna that the "wise man also seeketh for that which is homogeneous with his own nature. All creatures act according to their natures; what, then, will restraint effect?" Obviously there are two kinds of restraint, or, rather, two meanings of the word. When Krishna unequivocally states that restraint will be unavailing, he is disparaging *repression,* since repression can be advocated only by a man whose philosophy holds forth no hope of turning the forces presently at work "for evil" into forces that can move towards righteousness. The ecclesiastics of the Middle Ages were not the first to make an imposing dogma of a presumed need for "repression" of evil. The flagellant-ascetics encountered by Buddha, and with whom he remonstrated, represented another form of the same belief—that one must escape even the *proximity* of the world of the senses, and that the only relationships possible between man and the sensory world are either submission or escape.

It is small wonder that leading psychologists of the twentieth century have developed a persevering antipathy to the doctrines of soul,

for "soul" is still widely interpreted as "that *pure* part of us which must learn to leave the present world, in toto, behind." Whatever the psychologists' failings, they are possessed of a true conviction when they assert that happiness and maturity for a "soul" (if there be one), are logically impossible unless it has learned to come to terms—intelligently and sympathetically—with the world in which it presently lives. Hence that portion of the average psychologist's philosophy which is "theosophical": the recognition that nothing and no situation may be regarded as entirely evil, but that in the sphere of morality we deal rather with relative enlightenment and unenlightenment. Some of the work of the psychologists is therefore akin to the labors of Socrates in his unsettlement of conventional morality, which, in ancient Athens as in all other times, had perniciously established rigid categories of "goodness" and "badness."

The second meaning of "restraint" is closer to, though not identical with, the psychologists' definition of "sublimation." The worth of the sublimation concept is in its implicit avowal of the necessity for individual moral choices through which man may gradually improve his physical and psychical impulses. The Inner War, on this view, is to be waged against one's own faulty attitudes of mind, not against *personifications of evil* represented by either individuals, rival religious groups, or rival nations. We may conclude that when Krishna tells Arjuna to fight against "lust," he is not talking about fighting against the "qualities of nature," but about refusing to let the energy of consciousness be dissipated in non-purposeful motions; that is, actions generated by the turbulence of the confused lower self.

One of the subtle signs of genuine Theosophical moral counsel is that it encourages men to enter—mentally and with deep sympathy—into the problems of the world. The "secret doctrine" of Theosophy, for instance, as contained in what are called the devotional books, implies a higher goal than that of the Dharmakaya. "Dharmakaya" is the Sanskrit term for the man who first wins the right to choose release from the troublesome associations of earth life—and then so chooses. It is the Nirmanakaya, not the Dharmakaya, who represents the Theosophical Mahatma—the man who perceives a deeper meaning in identification with *all selves* than in separation from "unworthy" selves. Therefore, we find Krishna explaining to

Arjuna that "all classes of men" may "involuntarily worship" the Self *if* their devotion includes the welfare of others. This must have been calculated to help Arjuna see that he must not seek superiority over others, but must instead learn to penetrate the illusory distinctions which separate the greatest man from his humblest counterpart in the lower ranks of society. The opening of the *Gita* discovers Arjuna ready to renounce all connection with a battlefield which, we may say, is peopled by men less intelligent than himself, and when Krishna tells him that the very principles of his nature will impel him to engage, the Teacher asserts a fundamental tenet of Theosophical evolutionary doctrine—that there is no real separation from any form of intelligence in the universe. Krishna's appearance as a battle companion, moreover, may be taken as a reminder that one is not likely to find such a being as Krishna ready to assist if one has sought only the company of the elect and shunned the battle; that is, disregarded obligations to those less enlightened who can be helped forward.

The student infers that an aspirant to the company and counsel of a Great Teacher must seize firmly the opportunities of his own karmic situation before any help from "on high" can be expected. The seeking of Great Teachers and leaders, if not preceded by this resolve, results only in blind selfish worship of some source of power which one hopes will partisanly mediate between himself and his karma. According to the presentation of Buddha's teaching in the *Dhammapada,* also, this line of reasoning is held to be the best sort of sensible advice. Buddha instructs his disciple to ascertain wherein his own good lies, and not to deviate from it for the "good, however great, of another." Yet these admonitions might be to ensure *preparation* for seeking the company of the wise, rather than to recommend merely solitary endeavor. The *Dhammapada* also has this to say:

> It is right to serve a wise and intelligent man, one who shows where treasures lie hid; one who reveals the shortcomings in others. . . . Even the gods aspire towards those who are enlightened and mindful, who are wise and devoted in meditation. Therefore (let a man follow) the steadfast, the wise, the learned, one pre-eminent in character (Arhat), the fulfiller of vows and the noble man.

This would seem to indicate, in turn, that when one fully accepts the interpenetration of his life and destiny with that of humanity in general, he then needs to seek the most intelligent companionship. This is because help to the innumerable human beings who possess but a spark of mind can often come best through examples of sustained, fitting relationships among more responsible individuals. Seldom, for example, can a Great Teacher benefit others by direct personal involvement, since the ties natural to a perfected man might throw too great a strain upon the capacities of a "younger" and more distracted soul.

We have, then, to accept in both heart and mind our relationship to the heterogeneous world; we yet must *seek,* too, for what, under our present karma, is *homogeneous* to our natures and within our "natural" orbit. This raises a new complexity, which cannot be fully solved by saying that we must attach ourselves to that which is homogeneous to our "higher nature" and struggle against all that our "lower nature" represents. In the context of any conception of universal soul evolution, we can only conclude that the man who avoids association with those whom he considers less than his equals will not come to terms with that "general" lower nature of all mankind, which—in himself as in others—so needs alteration and improvement. The answer must be that the wise man, seeking further wisdom through association with either "equals" or "superiors," will also be ready to "associate" with those who seem presently "less" than his "equals"—whenever called by karmic request, spoken or unspoken. These are distinctions which the aristocracy of earth has habitually failed to make. The abstract question is further complicated by the fact that association with those who are "not our equals" is often because of a desire to escape from the moral responsibilities of our fullest maturity, through the pretense of belonging to a sphere of lesser responsibility where acts and pleasures uncongenial to a life of higher perception can be indulged.

Achieving *synthesis* between ourselves and all classes of men and experience would seem the goal for any philosophy intending to encourage Universality. Yet this must be "with wisdom and discretion"—and by karmic need—accomplished.

ON THE LOOKOUT

The Victory of Sound

Now that television (with its incessant impact upon sight and sound) is threatening to oust mere radio as the chief home entertainment, the mental health authorities everywhere are becoming even more worried than they used to be about the effect upon listeners, particularly children. The Nuffield Professor of Psychiatry, University of Leeds (England), gave expression to some of these fears when addressing a Nursery School Association in January, 1950. Also, a Swiss writer has dealt with the whole subject of the influence of the spoken word and cognate noises upon the world of today. His work *Die Welt des Schweigens,* published in Zurich in 1949, was reviewed in the London *Times Literary Supplement* of Aug. 5, 1949. The student of *mantrika-sakti* (one of the six primary forces in Nature) will sympathize with M. Picard's contentions in relation to the contribution made by the misuse of sound to the anxiety and restlessness of this modern age. After all, sound is a valid element in that arcane knowledge which becomes sorcery, if abused.

Sound and its Potentialities

If anyone doubts the nature of the tremendous occult power which is Sound, let him ponder these words:

> Sound generates, or rather attracts together, the elements that produce an *ozone,* the fabrication of which is beyond chemistry, but within the limits of Alchemy. It may even *resurrect* a man or an animal whose astral "vital body" has not been irreparably separated from the physical body by the severance of the magnetic or odic chord. *As one saved thrice from death* by that power, the writer ought to be credited with knowing personally something about it. (*S.D.* I, 555.)

It is not astonishing that greater attention is being paid to this subject today, when we are ushering in an Atomic age, for we are told by H. P. Blavatsky that "Atoms are called 'Vibrations' in Occultism; also 'Sound'—collectively" (*S.D.* I, 633). M. Picard, in his observation of contemporary life, suffers no delusions about the potency of sound in our civilization. He explains the discontinuity and

bewilderment of mankind today, and the change that seems to be taking place in the nature of man, by the general loss of silence. The whole basis of our outlook is being transformed, for (as M. Picard points out) silence as well as speech is indispensable to our nature: "And it is not something negative—a cessation of speech—but positive, 'an original phenomenon like love, faithfulness, death and life'."

Words Without Meaning

Enumerated in the eightfold Path of Gautama Buddha was "Right Speech." M. Picard remarks that, as silence has gradually disappeared, the spoken and written word has become meaningless:

> Silence today is nothing but a pause between noises. Thus in the general din that fills the world words lose their sense and become mere word-noises (Wortgerausche). Silence no longer produces speech, but one word produces another in endless repetition with less intention of making sense than of being audible.

M. Picard's judgment is that the words of poets like Lao Tse and Sophocles, which spring profoundly from the silence within their souls, can hope to find no parallel in an epoch where what men seek in fiction and poetry is largely noise. In striking examples, he shows the deterioration of so many modern authors in a world of words without meaning:

> Words have qualitative value, but word-noises are uttered merely for their quantity and can contain anything: for example, Bolshevism, Nazism, Antisemitism. They provide the apparatus of irresponsibility and the expressions of mass thinking.

The Spoken Word

M. Picard has some pungent things to say, too, about the word-noises which, perhaps, have reached their maxima on the radio:

> Man does not make the radio; the radio makes man—it gives him stimuli and opinions and establishes his relationship to objects and to his very existence. One need only skilfully infuse into the noise of the radio any concept one wishes to popularize, and it is likely at length to be accepted without criticism by the listener.

Certainly, the use of wireless propaganda in the last quarter of a century has confirmed this diagnosis. In 1888, when *The Secret Doctrine* was published, there were not many who believed the truth of the author's contention that *"the spoken word has a potency un-*

known to, unsuspected, and disbelieved in by the modern 'sages'." Today, we know something of the appalling evil that can befall the soul of a nation by crafty use of the spoken word on the radio, reaching millions of passive listeners. As to the effect upon the individual, M. Picard reminds us that if somebody speaks to us we have, usually, an opportunity of answering. The fact that, in front of the radio set, answers are neither possible nor expected, makes man restless, morbid and nervous. For this reason, he sees a special aptness in Kierkegaard's words: "The present state of the world, our whole life is sick. If I were a doctor and were asked: 'What advice can you give?' I would answer: 'Create silence!'" Theosophical students will remember, in this connection:

> The early Gnostics claimed that their Science, the Gnosis, rested on a square, the angles of which represented respectively *Sigè* (Silence), *Bythos* (Depth), *Nous* (Spiritual Soul or Mind), and *Aletheia* (Truth). (*S.D.* II, 573.)

AFRICA—ANCIENT AND MODERN

That Africa, as a continent, appeared before Europe, and that some portions of it will enter into the future land masses known in the Puranas as *Saka* and *Pushkara,* is a familiar teaching in esoteric anthropology. Here, as in other parts of the world, colonial empires are seen to be passing. Yet the real lessons of antiquity have still to be learnt. In 1949, for instance, the Royal Anthropological Institute held an exhibition of traditional sculpture from the British Colonies, especially from Africa. In London, at the same time, there was a remarkable display of Nigerian masks, collected and arranged at his own expense by the Surveyor of Antiquities, Nigeria, and the British Museum put on a special show of African arts and crafts. The occasion was utilized by one correspondent writing to the London *Times* from the School of African and Oriental Studies to say that, in view of the importance of finding a substitute for the spiritual values which he admitted could certainly be identified in the passing tribal life, the best foundation for African society would be discovered in the Christian *faith.* As if Christian *civilization,* instrumental as that has been in so many ways in disrupting African society, were not enough! This may be said without disparagement to the humanitarian efforts of such great men as Dr. David Livingstone and Dr. Albert Schweitzer.

Africa's Lesson for Europe

Fortunately, the Honorary Secretary of the Royal Anthropological Institute (Mr. W. Fagg, M.A.) gave a different picture. "It is not enough," he wrote, "to encourage these peoples 'to participate in the more sophisticated culture and political development of the ruling race,' [he was quoting from a *Times* leading article] . . . there is much for us to learn from them if we will only do so before their sophistication has progressed too far." He pointed out that at the Institute exhibition of nearly 100 masterpieces of traditional sculpture, "the African genius especially is seen at its finest and in astonishing variety, from the Ife sculptures which outdo Praxiteles in naturalism to the awe-inspiring cubism of the Niger delta tribes." And, to emphasize the lesson, he added:

> Some African tribes have practised democracy for centuries in a manner unparalleled in ancient or modern Europe; the deep faith of a tribesman in his pagan religion, informing his whole life, is perhaps more meritorious than the lip-service of many a European to the Christian faith; and the study of what keeps a tribal community together and functioning harmoniously carries many lessons for those who are distressed by the progressive compartmentalization of our society in an age of planning. These matters and much else may be studied in existing works by anthropologists, but much indeed remains to be done in the short time before detribalization has gone too far and spiritual values have given place to materialism. (London *Times,* June 29, 1949.)

Cultural Values in Perspective

At the very outset of her public work, H. P. Blavatsky asked: "In what particular is the knowledge of the present century so superior to that of the ancients?" In his own way, and in the special connection of African culture, Mr. Fagg asks the same question. But the idea that the Western races have a monopoly of cultural values dies hard. The dangers of conclusions drawn from existing conditions, and the myopic quality of so much of "civilized" thinking, were clearly enunciated by a nineteenth century writer, whose *Modern Science and Modern Thought* was so frequently and appositely quoted in *The Secret Doctrine*—Mr. Samuel Laing. In *Human Origins,* published in 1894, Mr. Laing wrote:

> The immense antiquity which on the lowest possible estimate can be assigned for the proved existence of man, carries us back to a period when geological, geographical, and climatic conditions were so entirely different, that all inferences from those of the present period are useless. For instance, certainly half the Himalayas, and probably the whole, were under the sea; the Pamir and Central Asia, instead of being the roof of the world, may have been fathoms deep under a great ocean. Greenland and Spitzbergen were types of the north temperate climate best suited for the highest races of man. (*op. cit.* p. 412.)

THE DIVISION OF RACES

There are those who believe in tradition even more than in written history, and they will commend Mr. Fagg's desire (shared by like-minded anthropologists) to assist in the evolution of tribal cultures towards a better state "without loss of the special values of their past, some of which we have ourselves lost or never had." The European who is inclined to be arrogant in his fancied superiority (even after two World Wars, with their dominant European setting!) would do well to ponder these words of H. P. Blavatsky, written with special reference to African peoples:

> If tomorrow the continent of Europe were to disappear and other lands to re-emerge instead; and if the African tribes were to separate and scatter on the face of the earth, it is they who, in about a hundred thousand years hence, would form the bulk of the civilized nations. And it is the descendants of those of our highly cultured nations, who might have survived on some one island, without any means of crossing the new seas, that would fall back into a state of relative savagery. Thus the reason given for dividing humanity into *superior* and *inferior* races falls to the ground and becomes fallacy. (*S.D.* II, 425.)

HISTORY OF THE TALMUD

For long the study of the rabbinic commentaries known as the *Talmud* has been rendered difficult, not only because of their bulk and crabbed language, but chiefly owing to the fact that their translation into a European tongue was frowned upon as a disservice to Jews and Judaism. This compilation of Jewish civil and religious law consists of two collections—the Babylonian (completed c. A.D. 500) and the Palestinian (completed in Palestine c. A.D. 350). It was first printed in Venice in 1520, and now the Soncino Press in

London have published, complete in 34 volumes, *The Babylonian Talmud,* edited by Dr. I. Epstein. For the first time, the English reader has access to a full and adequate translation of a fundamental document of Judaism. That a large part of the Christian world has invariably vilified the *Talmud* is sufficient justification for Jewish secretiveness. From the thirteenth century, writes a reviewer in the London *Times Literary Supplement* (Jan. 13, 1950)—

> the burning of copies of the Talmud became a laudable act and normal accompaniment of the periodical Jew-baitings. So thorough was this policy of destruction that only one complete manuscript of the Talmud has survived. Even after the invention of printing, when ignorance of the Talmud's real character became less excusable, the hostility did not slacken: earlier ignorance merely gave place to cultivated prejudice. Every copy of the Talmud which came from the press was scrutinized by an official censor: the supposed references to Christianity were blacked out, and so was every occurrence of such words as "Gentile," "idolator," "Edomite," "Sadducee," or "heretic," since in these the Christian authorities suspected some concealed abuse of Christianity.

But, while it may be true to say that this national literature made for the survival of the Jewish nation, it is not sufficiently recognized that, in its present form, the *Talmud* was "completed from older materials," and that it is "the later Rabbis and the Talmudic scheme that killed out all spirituality from the body of their symbols, leaving only their Scriptures—a dead shell from which the Soul has departed" (*S.D.* II, 454 and 459 fn).

A National Literature

In the sense that the Talmud met the needs of the Jewish people in exile, and satisfied their nature, it may be regarded as one of the greatest national literatures in the world. Yet, seeing the transitoriness of the tradition in our day as compared with a century ago, when Jewish educational practice ensured that every child learnt from the Talmud (the volumes have become a specialist study and the Talmud is reproached for its "excessive pietism"), it is matter for regret that Jewish revulsion from the West should at one time have produced what has been called "the neo-Asiatic Judaism" of the Talmud. The reviewer already cited contrasts the failure of the Second Revolt in A.D. 135, which severed all cultural links with Europe, with the vision of Philo of Alexandria (c. 30 B.C./45 A.D.),

who was able to "see Judaism as a philosophy of life fully abreast of the modern thought of his time," for Jewish thought then continued to absorb much that was Hellenistic, just as its own conceptions influenced the thought of the Mediterranean world. How much of Jewish thought and history would have been altered for good if, instead of a book-Judaism, these had been influenced by such a thinker as Philo Judaeus, who could write of magic, for instance, as unveiling "the operations of nature" and leading "to the contemplation of celestial powers"! (*De Spec. Legibus,* quoted in *Isis,* I, 25.)

LIGHT IN THE DARKNESS

The reasons for Jewish devotion to the Talmud are not far to seek, notwithstanding its rejection by various schools of reformed Judaism. The work is not what Luther called it, "nothing but godlessness, lies, cursing, and swearing," nor is it to be deemed as being for Jews what the New Testament is to Christians, or the Koran to Muslims:

> The Jews have cherished it, studied it, and lived within it, because they see in it a stadium displaying four centuries and more of Jewish mental life devoted to 'Torah' (meaning the way of life and thought founded on Scripture). *(ibid.)*

And, like all Scriptures, what of truth it may contain has the same origin as have other scriptural allegories. As illustration, it may be useful to add to these notes the following reference to the Talmudic tradition of Mikael:

> In the Talmud, *Mikael* (Michael) is "Prince of *Water*" and the chief of the seven Spirits, for the same reason that his prototype (among many others) Sanat—Sujata,—the chief of the Kumaras—is called Ambhansi, "Waters"..... Because the "Waters" is another name of the "Great Deep," the primordial Waters of space or *Chaos,* and also means "Mother," *Amba,* meaning Aditi and Akasha, the Celestial Virgin-Mother of the visible universe. (*S.D.* I, 459-60.)

THE STILL MYSTERIOUS "BOOK DZYAN"

A correspondent has provided us with a passage from *Major Trends in Jewish Mysticism,* by Gershom G. Scholem (1941 ed.) which can be quoted in this connection, since it perpetuates the same "nationalistic" error in Jewish thought that is noticed so frequently in *The Secret Doctrine.* Mr. Scholem writes (pp. 398-9) that "There

can be little doubt in my opinion that the famous stanzas of the mysterious Book Dzyan on which Madame H. P. Blavatsky's magnum opus, *The Secret Doctrine,* is based owe something both in title and content, to the pompous pages of the Zoharic writing called Sifra Di-Tseniutha. . . . The Book Dzyan is therefore nothing but an occultistic hypostasy of the Zoharic Title." Readers who care to examine the above opinion will find ample treatment of the subject in *The Secret Doctrine,* by consulting the Index under the headings: "Jew," "Israelites," "Zohar," "Kabala." The section, "The 'Holy of Holies.' Its Degradation" (*S.D.* II, 459-474), goes beyond the historical data for the comparatively recent origin of the extant Hebrew scriptures, and discusses on intrinsic evidence the special misinterpretations and narrowed conceptions which disqualify the Jewish teachings as an original source of esoteric philosophy. (The article on "Mirza Murad Ali Beg," THEOSOPHY XXXVII, 405, brings up another case in point.)

HUMAN MERCY

There is perhaps no current problem which so reveals a man's outlook on the human race as does that of "mercy killing," so-called. As one doctor pointed out, even assuming that the motives of all those concerned were above reproach, legalized mercy killing would "shatter the public's faith in the medical profession." It would also tend insensibly to coarsen the sensibilities of physicians, he intimated. Once the first step has been taken and the right to liquidate another human being asserted, where will the process stop? Dorothy Dunbar Bromley summarized the views of six eminent physicians on this question in a recent column in the New York *Herald Tribune.* According to one psychiatrist, German doctors at first resisted when the Nazi regime ordered them to put imbeciles to death. After they gave in, the sluice gates were opened.

"REACTIONARY?"

> "It may sound reactionary," an internal-medicine specialist in his early forties said, "but I believe it is a doctor's job to make it easy to live, not to die. I was brought up to believe, too, that a doctor never gives up. Consider the advances that medical science is making."

> "If the laity only knew," an eminent physician in his sixties said, "how little the best of us know about what goes on inside a patient's body, people would stop signing petitions for euthanasia. . . ."

If "what goes on" in the patient's body is still such a mystery to men who have devoted lives to the study, it is even more to the point that what goes on in the patient's *mind* is at least equally unknown to the observer—and often, we may say, to the man himself. Who has not found that it is usually only after an experience has been lived through and "finished with" on the visible, physical plane, that the real meaning and significance of the event breaks through to the individual's conscious mind? Certainly, the moment of death, naturally arrived at and preceded by no matter how much pain and suffering, brings with it some such clarity of vision not otherwise obtained. Who has a right to interfere in such an ultimate experience?

WHAT ABOUT ANIMALS?

But perhaps one of the most interesting arguments in regard to mercy killing is that advanced, for instance, by Miss Emily Marx, attorney of Alstead, New Hampshire, in defense of Dr. Hermann Sander, around whom the present controversy precipitated itself. "Mercy killing is almost compulsory for animals," Miss Marx declared (New York *World-Telegram,* Jan 27). "Certainly, Dr. Sander's humanitarian act in relieving a patient in her death throes was justifiable. It is incredible that they indicted him." Yes, it is incredible to still believe that indicting someone helps them raise their concept of human sacredness. But when Miss Marx argues that since it is a state law that an incurably suffering animal be put to death, the same merciful legislation should be made to apply to human beings, she asks acceptance for a view of man which may more properly be regarded as current prejudice than time-held faith.

Those who have pondered the statement in Mr. Judge's *Ocean of Theosophy,* in the chapter on evolution, with regard to the sin of the mindless, that "the karmic effect of this, including as it does all races, has yet to be fully felt and understood," may wonder if a portion of that karma is not manifesting in the widespread reversion to an animal standard in determining what is "natural" to man.

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